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LIVING ON HEAVEN'S DOORSTEP:
A MULTIMEDIA PROJECT WITH THE WARM BEACH SENIOR COMMUNITY

by

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Approved _____

Date _____

Abstract

Having a website is no longer a luxury but a requirement. Nonprofits need to take advantage of the digital age to better reach their constituents yet, overall, they struggle to do this well. Because of lack of resources, their reliance on volunteers, and the inability to keep up with the evolving demands of a website, nonprofits (especially small ones) are not using the web to their full advantage. Taking the research and applying it to a nonprofit retirement community—Warm Beach Senior Community—the challenges are seen first-hand.

1. Introduction

In the twenty-first century, having an online presence is vital to sustaining and growing a nonprofit organization's audience. A website is no longer an option; it is a requirement. Yet, because of the nature of nonprofits, many are not utilizing their websites to their full potential. This paper examines the relationship between nonprofits and their digital presence (specifically web presence) in reaching their target audiences (donors, sponsors, clients, and others). The literature review covers nonprofit websites and how organizations take advantage of digital communication. It also delves into the obstacles and shortcomings; why nonprofits do not have flourishing websites and what organizations have done in an attempt to get over those hurdles. The next step was partnering with Warm Beach Senior Community, hereafter referred to as Warm Beach, to tell their stories in a multimedia project, putting my research into practice. The methodology section explains why I chose Warm Beach, how I worked with them, and the process of creating multimedia stories.

2. Literature Review

The literature around nonprofits and their relationship with the internet is extensive. While this review is by no means not exhaustive, it is intended to provide a holistic starting point for the rest of the project. Capitalizing on a web presence, nonprofits aim to connect with their constituents where they are. Every nonprofit tends to have three objectives for their website: raise money, inform the public, and interact with the public (Hooper and Stobart 330). They work to provide information about and raise awareness for themselves, with the former being the top priority. This best occurs through storytelling, and it is what many sites are missing. Despite best practices for market effectiveness calling for this, “The use of interactive and multimedia content is still very limited in the sector” (Wenham et al. 219).

1. Importance of nonprofit websites

Nonprofit websites, as with all websites, must target, reach, and retain the right audience (McMahon 46). There are four standard types of websites: a static site, a dynamic site, a content managed system (CMS), and portal websites. Static websites are the most basic; they are essentially a digital business card. A CMS site is WordPress, Wix, Squarespace, Weebly, and other such platforms. These two options, static and CMS, tend to be the most popular among nonprofits for their simplicity and ease of use.

With a variety of options for organizations’ websites, it seems evident that everyone should be online: “In the 21st century, there is no reason why any NPO should not have a Web site or other online presence” (Pope et al. 196). Nonprofits have the highest success with the internet when they view their website as more than just a resource for their constituents but a way to manage relationships with donors and constituents (Bhagat 18). Fostering these relationships ensures websites are both regularly updated, so that information is correct for visitors, and that these relationships inform how the website evolves. The internet is an excellent

tool for building strong constituent relationships, which leads to optimized fundraising, special events, and advocacy (19).

2. Nonprofits on the web

Aside from the nonprofit's mission, the primary goal is fundraising. It is no surprise that nonprofits view their website as another fundraising avenue, and this is clear in the nonprofit language websites employ. A look at three South Asian non-governmental organizations highlights this specific language. The Akshaya Patra nonprofit's 2015 website used these words when asking for donations: "Renewing Gifts, Renewing Hope: Give just \$15 a month to provide school meals and access to education, hope and opportunity to a child every month" (Baig 11). Their rhetoric creates a commodity, one of hope, to be consumed by donors (11). While all websites, nonprofit, for-profit, and otherwise, manipulate language to get their point across, nonprofits can easily take this to the extreme. The same study concluded that "The difference based on privilege, between the donor and person in need creates the dynamics of commodification, and in turn provides the consumer with satisfaction of authentic giving" (11). The language manipulation is not necessarily corrupt; in fact, it may be necessary for nonprofits to achieve their goals and fulfill their mission.

In addition to merely asking for donations, the language used in telling the stories of the organization can be skewed. Examining an extended narrative of two children that a nonprofit helped, the capitalist notions are taken advantage of: "The discourse of hope ... is commoditised in terms of meritocratic gains ... This inadvertently reifies how privilege or status can be earned through hard work and education" (13). This piece was written for the intended donor audience, controlling the website to capture potential supporters.

The age-old saying that a picture is worth a thousand words is never more accurate than when applied to nonprofits and the images they use. The Grameen Foundation's 2015 homepage

“circulated images of Indian rural women draped in colourful saris” with captions attached (10).

The women in the photos showed a variety of facial expressions, with some smiling and others looking stoic and away from the camera (10). The study has half a dozen other examples of nonprofit websites and their images. It is important to note here that, while distributing these photos is not inherently spreading lies or false information, a certain amount of manipulation occurs to tug at donors’ hearts. The same thing happens in advertising, though usually to a higher degree.

While there are perhaps a dozen different goals that a nonprofit’s website hope to achieve, nonprofits rarely have the capacity to hit them all and sacrifices must be made. In a study looking at Polish nonprofit organizations, nonprofits found their greatest strength in “providing basic information to online users, such as a mission statement, organization logo and history, general contact information on the homepage and major links on the homepage to the subpages, as well as having a short loading time” (Olinski and Szamrowski 348). The nonprofits seemed to thrive in this basic information arena, and that led to beneficial results in their generation of return visits and their trend to provide useful information to donors and volunteers (348). They were able to do one thing really simply and really well. This also reinforces the less is more mantra and quality over quantity. It is easy to overdo an online presence and try to take on too much. So, even if it is only out of necessity and lack of options, playing to one strength online can be the best option.

Almost 80 percent of the Polish nonprofits analyzed had a Facebook page (349). Though these nonprofits also had websites, they used each platform uniquely. Their website was used mostly as “digital information leaflets,” and Facebook was the space where the organization built relationships with the public (349). For these nonprofits, the website is not being used to its full

communicative potential, and they are turning to other sources to fill this void.

Internet marketing is vital in today's media age. More and more, nonprofits use the internet for fundraising, nurturing relationships, improving advocacy, and inform their constituents (Hart 353). To take this a step further, nonprofits should also employ emails, friend invitations, "pass-along" marketing, and donations based from the web (357). Nonprofits, focusing solely on one-way communication online, are failing to develop client and donor relationships further (Waters 63).

Larger nonprofits and groups associated with national entities have far greater resources to devote to their website compared to small nonprofits. Though statistically, these larger nonprofits are more likely to have a dynamic and comprehensive website, many still desire further capabilities of their site (Pope et al. 194). Most nonprofits did not advance their online status beyond one-way communication, citing their inability to have someone manage the site (194).

Like many other organizations, nonprofits are struggling with search engine algorithms and registrations. The capture efficiency of even the largest charity website could be minimal if search engine registration is not adequately carried out (Saxton and Game 9). While the act of registering a domain with a search engine is sometimes thought to be a scam, this research shows otherwise. On websites, the capture efficiency looks at how many visitors a website had and how many of them gave their email or other information to the organization. This capture rate is significant because being able to follow up with the website visitors and contact them for fundraising, or other, purposes is vital to the health of a nonprofit (Wenham et al. 219). Fortunately, this marketing is easily achieved with time and the right skills. Unfortunately, nonprofits are failing in this area precisely because they do not have someone with the right

skills or training to devote time to this (Pinho and Macedo 175).

3. Obstacles

No matter the technological dreams and aspirations of nonprofits, creating and maintaining a website necessitates time, money, and expertise that not all nonprofits have access to (Hooper and Stobart 328). Nonprofits that are mostly volunteer-based are less likely to acquire and implement new technology, websites included (Corder 2). This causation occurs because information technology resources require training for practical use (7). It is challenging to train volunteers to use sophisticated and rapidly evolving technology (7). Because volunteer-based nonprofits tend to be smaller, while larger nonprofits are inclined to have more paid employees, this correlates with financing and budgeting. Additionally, volunteer-based nonprofits tend to have a high turnover rate with their volunteer base, making it challenging to have volunteers with technological skills. Volunteers that are at a nonprofit short-term will not have the ability to build upon their knowledge to implement technology as it advances (7). Moreover, even if nonprofits do invest the resources in their volunteers to receive such training, there is no guarantee that the volunteers will continue with the organization long enough for the payoff to be worth it.

Within nonprofits, agency decision makers who are receptive to technology tend to be people who have studied the use of it and believe that such technology can directly improve services or they actively seek information about new technology (9). Agency decision makers' attitudes tend to be representative of the organization as a whole because these key persons are influential (10). It is true what they say, the attitude of one affects the attitude of many.

Because current literature on website design and usability heavily focuses on for-profit agencies, this review will look at the restructuring of a library website as similar to a nonprofit. This example provides practical steps for overhauling the library website that can be replicated in other sectors—such as with nonprofits. Two main people updated the Colgate University

libraries' website, and they were advised by two others (Buell and Sandford 118). This small team was highly skilled yet still considerably understaffed compared to commercial websites that have entire teams working on them. Nonprofits are likely to follow a similar path as the library team, with just a few key people, for budget purposes as previously discussed.

In initial meetings, the team decided on its primary goals and objectives for this new site (119). They focused on improving design, usability, content creation and governance, and uniting all their sites on one URL and a single server (119). While they did narrow their goals to a few specifics, it was still a big undertaking to update the website. They finally updated their site because they had to, they were out of options. This points to a greater trap that many nonprofits fall into.

The timeline for this website update was nearly a year from the initial proposal to the site going live (121-122). During that time, the small team worked to create a new website, update the faculty on the changes, train staff on the new features, and educate all users on the changes. It was necessary, but many nonprofits do not have these resources or this amount of time to put into a new website—even if it is needed. This library was fortunate enough to be part of a university that knew they needed to adapt to keep their students and faculty up to date and were able to provide the resources, time and money, to fulfill this need.

Similarly, a study of nonprofit theaters' websites in southern New Jersey investigated the theaters' web presence. They found that "Although patrons have the means to seek information ... small theatre companies often do not have the personnel, expertise, or funding or time it takes to develop a credible Web presence" (Kendall 91). This same study found that these theater companies ran into the same issues that many nonprofits do when creating a website: "the theatre tends to begin from scratch, act independently, and use a volunteer to create a Web site that may

or may not match their organizational mission” (91). It is seen time and again that nonprofits do not have the resources necessary to create the functional website they so desperately need to thrive, meaning they often rely on volunteers to do the critical work. Once the original volunteer leavers, the organization is left high and dry to do this work.

The budget seems to be the biggest problem for nonprofits on their quest for a well-done website—or just a website in general. The internet has the potential to be an equalizer for organizations with vastly different budgets, a chance for nonprofits to be on a more even playing field (Kang and Norton 283). Such equality is rarely the case. The low budget of organizations is not resolved in this scenario and reaching a vast audience with their particular values and ideas is difficult (Olinski and Szamrowski 348). Especially for nonprofit organizations competing with for-profit organizations in their sector, inequality is prominent. Warm Beach is unique among senior communities as a nonprofit and that their budget for staff is not equal to their for-profit counterparts. However, they still have the same objectives in appealing to potential residents.

4. Shift to mobile

Today, we live in a mobile-first world; a world where people are more likely to access websites on their mobile devices before accessing them via a traditional desktop or laptop computer. In this sense, websites are almost old fashioned, and surely will continue evolving as technology grows. Despite the move to mobile applications, websites are a starting point for bridging this gap. Nearly all websites these days are mobile responsive, a term used to describe websites that are built to adjust according to the screen size on which the content is viewed. The issues that nonprofits face with their website are the same on mobile, and in some ways are amplified.

While the senior residents of Warm Beach are unlikely to be part of this mobile-first audience, their children and grandchildren are. As the world continues to move toward mobile

savvy sites and storytelling, it is likely that Warm Beach will expand into this area. Even in my time working with the staff, they realize that their website is mostly viewed by children of their residents or children of potential residents, and appealing to those people is almost as important as appealing to the seniors.

3. Methodology

This project was divided into four phases beginning with an investigation and research on potential non-profit clients. While I am a journalism student, I made the decision early on to work with a group where the stories could be told over time and be useful to the organization. Outlined below are the details of these phases.

Phase I – Finding a nonprofit to partner with and researching nonprofit websites.

In the summer of 2018, I began a list of potential nonprofits to work with for this project. Previously, I had interned with Footprints of Fight, a Washington nonprofit that supports families with children fighting pediatric cancer. While there, I had the joy of working on a longer, nonfiction narrative piece telling the story of the founders' son who had battled cancer. For this project, I was hoping to find an organization that I could tell a larger story as I had done with Footprints. With small nonprofits, they usually do not have the budget for such stories, but I saw firsthand how valuable and how beautiful they are.

With all that in mind, I reached out to The Krista Foundation for Global Citizenship in September of that year. They seemed the best fit because of useful contacts within the organization, their location to campus, and their need for a website update. Unfortunately, due to communications issues on both sides, we parted ways at the beginning of December.

I created a new list of nonprofits that I could work with and narrowed it down to Hope Central, a pediatric primary care and behavioral health nonprofit, and Warm Beach Senior Community, a nonprofit retirement community that had connections to Seattle Pacific University. Warm Beach was the natural choice because they were looking for someone to do what I was proposing. We agreed to work together by the end of December.

While Warm Beach is a nonprofit, they are inherently different from other, more traditional, nonprofits. The goal of their website is, like all nonprofits, a tool to attract donors but it is mostly a way to reach their constituents and potential residents and their families. After confirming my partnership with Warm Beach, I spent two weeks researching retirement/senior communities and their websites. Since most senior communities are not nonprofits, I also relied on my previous research on nonprofit websites to get a sense for what they were doing differently, if anything.

Interestingly, I found that there were many similarities between nonprofit websites and senior community websites. Senior community's websites are targeting potential residents, but they are primarily appealing to families, especially children, of those potential residents. Nonprofit websites are appealing to potential donors to join their cause and support their mission. In both cases, video and other multimedia elements were prevalent on the websites. This research later influenced changes to the medium stories were told in.

In my original conversation with Community Relations Director Sheila Bartlett, we discussed her dream for our partnership and set realistic expectations for the project. We decided I could create five pieces for them by the end, based on research that I had completed of other websites and the timeline of this project. These pieces were pitched as a combination of videos, audio pieces, and written stories. The videos would be interviews with residents and cover shots that capture the nature of Warm Beach. The audio pieces would be clips two minutes or less with one interviewee and no additional commentary by myself.

I pitched several ideas to Ms. Bartlett about how this could all come together. These are the original stories we agreed on:

- A video chronicling their “virtual cruise around the world.” They spent the winter months “traveling” around the world to different countries. Residents and staff that had lived or traveled to other places put together presentations to share with the community. These PowerPoint presentations dominated their Friday afternoons, and they each had a passport that they got stamped each week.
- A written/audio story with a slideshow covering the independence of the residents in the community. Initially, I was not sure if a written story or audio would be better. There was flexibility in changing any of the stories, but this one, in particular, we left open.
- A photo essay on the community service in the residents partake in, such as their work leading activities around campus, working at the thrift store, and volunteering in the skilled nursing area.
- Several audio pieces that highlight the staff’s perspective of the community.
- A video with donors talking about why they give to Warm Beach.

Phase II – Interviewing and gathering materials.

The first day at Warm Beach, I was there from 10 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. I took a tour of the campus and had a question and answer session with a dozen residents. The pages of notes that I took reaffirmed all the story pitches and helped identify residents that would be important to speak with to ask further questions on camera. This was also the day I shot footage for the cruise video, b-roll that I combined with later interviews.

Ms. Bartlett put together a list of residents that I would be able to interview for the videos and start getting material from, and much of this was based off the initial question and answer session we did.

I returned in January to begin the individual interviews. Each day for two days I was there from 8:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Over those days, I interviewed seven staff members and sixteen residents. I had a two-camera shot set up for the video interviews with residents and was recording audio to my cell phone with an external mic. Each interview was between fifteen and thirty minutes. While I did interview several couples, all of these initial interviews were done individually. I asked each resident the following questions:

- Say your name and how long you have lived at Warm Beach.
- Where do you live at Warm Beach? Since there are several living areas, I wanted this information in case I needed to organize interviews in this way.
- What was your past career?
- Why did you decide to move to Warm Beach?
- What makes Warm Beach so special?
- Can you describe some of the volunteering you do?
- What sorts of activities are you involved in around the community?
- For the last several months, you've all been on a cruise "around the world." What has that experience been like? This led to several follow-up questions depending on their involvement.
- Is there a word or a phrase that describes this place for you?
- Anything else you would like to share?

For the staff interviews, I only recorded audio via an external mic to my cell phone.

These interviews were between three and seven minutes. I asked them the following questions:

- Your name and official title.
- How long have you been working here?
- Why do you work here at Warm Beach? An occasional follow-up to this was “What makes Warm Beach so special?” if they struggled to answer the original question.
- Is there a word or phrase that describes this place for you?
- Can you talk about the relationship between the staff and the residents here?

A visit on a weekday in April provided an opportunity to shoot video of several different resident activities. The challenge was getting enough packed into one day, but Ms. Bartlett arranged a few things to make the production more efficient. I was there from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and captured about eight different events and activities.

A few weeks later, I made one final trip to Warm Beach to speak with donors and get outside shots of the campus. I was there from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. The staff was only able to have two donors speak with me, and they were residents that lived in the community. It was a different angle than I had imagined for the story and I had to adjust the plan. To accommodate this change, Ms. Bartlett sent me dozens of historical photos from the campus and the residents that I used in the donor video. This compensated for the changing perspective.

Phase III – Creating final elements and building a website.

Almost immediately in the editing process, I realized I had far too many interviews to fit into the original videos that I had pitched. Between interviewing the sixteen residents and setting

up a two-camera shot for each interview, I had 522 minutes of video. That is 8.7 hours of material. So, I changed the plan to make more videos to make use of the interviews. Revisiting my literature review and earlier research on nonprofit and retirement community websites, this aligned with what audiences were looking for.

To begin editing, I watched the video interviews to pull out essential snippets and began working to organize different clips into different projects. For example, in all the interviews I asked questions about the cruise events that were happening. All those clips I cut and set aside for when I worked on that video. I used Adobe Creative Cloud for all the editing: primarily Premier and Audition but Photoshop and others were used as needed.

As editing wrapped up, I created a WordPress site for Warm Beach. My role in this project was like that of a contractor, and this website is what I gave back to the organization for them to use. The website that I presented them was that of a supplemental site. It had only the pieces and information that I created for them, and little to no information that was on their current site. This gave them the option of either linking to the site I built from their main site, integrating and merging them, or seeing how stories were laid out on the supplemental site and transferring them to their site. Once I gave them the site and all the stories, the rest was up to them to implement the digital pieces.

[See website.](#)

Phase IV – Reflection.

Looking back on the project, I wish I could have done a few things differently. My experience with The Krista Foundation showed the importance of clearly outlining my role in the project from the outset and doing whatever necessary to ensure the other party fully understands

the agreement. I was lucky enough to have a second chance at this with Warm Beach and set clear expectations with them. Recognizing that every organization has unique communication styles is foundational for a healthy partnership.

In reporting, it is always important to gather more information and research that will be used in the final project, and that was true here. But I had more interviews than I knew what to do with, and that was a frustrating realization. Had I handled this differently and had more time, I would have found ways to incorporate more of that footage into the final products—especially as short snippets that could be looped different places on the website. While many of the interviews became redundant, they did reinforce the themes I had chosen to focus on.

From the beginning, there was always a dream of overhauling the entire website for Warm Beach, or whatever nonprofit I was working with. When I first came on board with Warm Beach, they were preparing to launch a new website and did not need my help with the site in its entirety. Thankfully, this allowed me to focus on the storytelling aspects and not get caught up in the website build or design. That being said, perhaps too late I realized that some of the stories I told did not have a good home on their site. Obviously the supplemental site was a bridge between this, but I wish there had been a more seamless way to connect all the pieces.

This project was ambitious and more than once it would have been helpful to have a second person with me (as is more common in video production). In some of the video interviews, the residents shifted a good amount while we talked. I learned early on that I needed to check the camera often to make sure things were still framed correctly, and lighting was good, but it did not always work, and it was awkward to interrupt interviews. Additionally, sifting through all the interviews and logging them was time-consuming. I never found an easy way to do this, so either having a better system or another person would have simplified this. Part of

what I love about storytelling is the collaboration between storytellers; with other reporters or even the conversations between reporter and editor. I realized how important that team aspect is for something more extensive like this.

Conclusion

When this project began a year ago, I had an idea where it would end up, but I did not foresee everything. As a writer, I expected to do more writing and spend time on longer written narratives, but research showed that multimedia storytelling is what audiences are looking for. I aimed to help Warm Beach Senior Community tell the stories of their community for their website, and I had to adjust. It worked out well, and multimedia storytelling was the way to go.

This project and partnership with Warm Beach could have continued forever. No amount of time would be enough to capture their stories and share them, if only because the internet changes so quickly and keeping up with the evolution never ends. There are hours of footage that I did not get to use anywhere, and I wish that had been different. Even with the amount of unused material, I wish I could have spent more time among the residents and really immersed myself in their lives. To the best of my ability, I captured life at Warm Beach, but I know there was much that I missed.

Realizing that nonprofits cannot do all they want with the web, there is a need for a sustainable model to do such work that I did with Warm Beach. Finding ways to replicate this study with students, freelancers, or other interested parties, and connect them with nonprofits could help bridge the technology gap that is so prominent.

There is also need for further research into the need for a mobile presence for senior communities such as Warm Beach, and time to implement such findings. Similarly, the importance of social media for nonprofits could be further explored. The literature review briefly touched on the mobile-first revolution and the importance of social media but did not fully flesh out. This was intentional since Warm Beach is situated in a unique place in the nonprofit world, in that their audience is not necessarily part of the mobile-first or social media demand.

Appendix I: Letter from Ms. Sheila Bartlett

As the Community Relations Director at Warm Beach Senior Community, I am always looking for new avenues to share the stories of our residents and engage new community members. Making a video featuring our residents and campus has been a goal for some time, but being a non-profit organization, we do not have the resources to spend on high-quality videography.

At the Free Methodist Leadership Summit in June 2018, I was discussing this issue with Debra Sequeira, Dean of Arts at Seattle Pacific University. Many of our residents are SPU alumni or former SPU employees, and Warm Beach and SPU have a long-standing positive relationship. We knew that SPU community members would be able to capture the spirit of Warm Beach, and we discussed the possibility of a student collaborating with Warm Beach to complete their final projects. I was delighted when Debra put me in touch with Dr. Peg Achterman, Assistant Professor of Communications & Journalism.

Initially Dr. Achterman's students had all selected year-end projects, but in November one student's original project fell-through. I met that student, Justina Brown, at a coffee shop in Seattle to get to know each other, talk about Warm Beach, and explore goals for the video. By the end of our meeting, Justina had already formed some excellent ideas of how to truly capture the essence of what Warm Beach was about. We envisioned a multipurpose marketing video that could be used on our website for both prospective employees and prospective residents, and could be shown at the National Free Methodist Conference in 2019. Justina later formalized the plan in writing. I knew for this project to work she had to use her creative skills and ingenuity.

Soon after, Justina began traveling the road north from Seattle to Warm Beach. She interviewed residents, held focus groups, attended activities, took pictures, and really invested

her time and energy to get to know Warm Beach and understand why it is such a special place for so many people. In fact, during one of the interviews, she found that one resident knew her grandparents very well.

Justina has been a joy to work with. She is smart, compassionate and driven. I know that she will accomplish great things in her life. We are truly grateful for all the work that she put into the videos and written pieces, and we are excited to share it with others. What a blessing she has been.

I know that God had a hand in bringing Justina and I together to be able for her to complete her senior project and to extend the legacy of our very beloved residents that continue to live full vibrant lives in such a beautiful and serene setting.

Sincerely,

Sheila Bartlett

Appendix II: Faith Statement

I love journalism and the world of news. I often wish I was born in a time when print journalism was still thriving because there is nothing better than reading the newspaper over breakfast and seeing your name in newsprint. But, as the news world changes to adapt to multimedia storytelling and a 24-hour news cycle, I have struggled with fitting my faith into my dreams of being part of a newsroom.

This project is the culmination of my journey to figure out what being a journalist means to me while holding my faith close. I know my vocational calling is to share stories, and while news reporters do this every day in the most incredible ways, working with a nonprofit allowed me to really get to know the people. Relationships are fundamental to Christian beliefs and I was able to invest in those relationships through this project. I spent hours with the people of Warm Beach and they graciously let me into their world. It was easy to care about them and their spouses or grandkids as they proudly showed me photographs.

Choosing to work with a nonprofit on this extended storytelling project was intentional. Carving out space to get to know the residents and the community was necessary to telling their stories well. Moreover, the spark of light that nonprofits have is clearly the Holy Spirit moving through the world. I have no doubt that I was in holy space every time I stepped onto their campus. Explicitly living out my faith among the staff and residents allowed me a chance to see into a world far different than that of a newsroom. It was easy to keep my faith at the front instead of putting it in a box while working on this.

College has been a time of wrestling with my faith and recognizing that I will not be able to explicitly and obviously live that out in a secular work environment. Reporters are called to be balanced, as unbiased as possible, and to get the whole story. I believe that Christians are

inherently called to this, as well. We are commanded to share the truth, give a voice to the voiceless, put others first, the list goes on. Yet, there is something different about being a Christian in a non-religious workplace and being a Christian working among Christians.

Surely this extraordinary experience with Warm Beach will not be repeated in every Christian organization I am part of in the future. I recognize that we live in a fallen world with flaws and broken people, myself included. But this experience taught me so much about how I want to live and work, even in secular contexts.

It is important to me that I do not lose sight of the values I hold most dear and important. I know that in secular work settings I am often in the minority with my views. Still, I want to make sure that relationships are at the forefront of how I live and that I work to get the story right every time.

Appendix III: Acknowledgements

The residents at Warm Beach Senior Community stole my heart. It was not difficult; there is something about hearing people's stories and seeing them light up when they talk about their passions that connect us all as humans. I am forever indebted to the people that so willingly let me into their lives. I can never repay them for all they did for me.

Many thanks are due to my first-reader, adviser, cheerleader until the end—Dr. Peg Achterman. This would not have been possible without her countless hours of editing and guidance and enforced deadlines throughout the year. Truly, I would not have made it to the end without her encouragement and the constant reminders to send her drafts of what I had been working on.

While my family may not have seen the long hours and stress that went into this, they graciously listened to me talk about this for a year—both the joys and the frustrations. Their love and patience while I cried to them on the phone and shared exciting stories about the people I met, sustained me through this adventure. Mom, Dad, Preston, I am so grateful for your support because I would have abandoned this when the going got tough had it not been for you all. I am eternally grateful and promise that we can all spend more, less stressful, time together.

Appendix IV

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